

Message Text

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ACTION INR-07

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R 151555Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY OSLO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 989

INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USIA WASHDC

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, NO

SUBJ: BIOGRAPHIC: ADDITIONAL NEW MEMBERS OF NORWAY'S CABINET

REF: OSLO 0252

1. REFTEL REPORTED LIST OF NEW CABINET APPOINTMENTS IN NORDLI GOVERNMENT AND BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON NEW DEFENSE MINISTER ROLF HANSEN. THIS TELEGRAM REPORTS BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON THE OTHER FIVE NEW MEMBERS OF THE CABINET ANNOUNCED JAN 12 BY INCOMING PRIME MINISTER ODVAR NORDLI. THE REMAINING NINE MEMBERS OF THE NEW CABINET ARE HOLDOVERS FROM THE BRATTELI GOVERNMENT, ALTHOUGH TWO OF THEM WILL SHIFT CABINET POSTS. BIOGRAPHIC REPORT ON NORDLI WAS SUBMITTED SEPT 10, 1975.

2. COMMUNICATIONS MINISTER RAGNAR CHRISTIANSEN IS ABLE, EXPERIENCED, A GOOD-FRIEND OF THE US AND CONTACT OF THE EMBASSY. THIS SHOULD BE HELPFUL IN THE CABINET

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BUT HIS EFFECTIVENESS WILL BE MISSED IN THE STORTING.

3. COMMERCE AND SHIPPING MINISTER HALLVARD BAKKE IS THE MOST CONTROVERSIAL AND CRITICIZED APPOINTMENT. AN ACTIVE MEMBER OF LABOR'S RADICAL YOUTH ORGANIZATION, NATO OPPONENT (AT LEAST IN THE PAST) AND CAMPAIGNER AGAINST NORWEGIAN COMMON MARKET MEMBERSHIP. BAKKE HAS LITTLE EXPERIENCE FOR THE JOB, EXCEPT HIS SCHOOLING. HIS NOMINATION IS A CONCESSION TO LABOR YOUTH AND PARTY'S LEFT WING. REPORTEDLY, NORDLI'S FIRST CHOICE WAS RAGNAR CHRISTIANSEN AS COMMERCE MINISTER AND ARNE NILSEN (SUBSEQUENTLY CHOSEN AS STORTING FINANCE COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND STEERING GROUP MEMBER IN PLACE OF CHRISTIANSEN) AS COMMUNICATIONS MINISTER. NILSEN, LIKE BAKKE, IS FROM BERGEN. LABOR PARTY MODERATES AT THIS STAGE DO NOT SEEM OVERLY CONCERNED ABOUT BAKKE'S NOMINATION, HOWEVER. WHEN ASKED ABOUT HIS OPPOSITION TO NATO, BAKKE SAID HE DID NOT FEEL NORWAY'S MEMBERSHIP IN NATO WAS AT ISSUE ANY LONGER AND THAT HE HAD NO DIFFICULTY ACCEPTING LABOR'S PLATFORM(WHICH SUPPORTS NATO).

4. SOCIAL MINISTER RUTH RYSTE, NORWEGIAN TRADE UNION FEDERATION (LO) PRESIDENT ASPENGREN'S WOMEN IN THE CABINET, IS EXPERIENCED IN HER DEPARTMENT'S FIELD AND IS MODERATE AND RESPECTED, BUT A BIT BELOW THE LEVEL OF IMPORTANCE WITHIN THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT THAT MOST LO CABINET MEMBERS HAVE HAD. THIS REFLECTS THE FACT THAT LO, FACING RETIREMENT OF ITS PRESIDENT IN SPRING 1977, CANNOT SPARE ANY OF ITS TOP OFFICERS. SHE IS ALSO A FOURTH WOMAN IN THE CABINET.

5. CHURCH AND EDUCATION MINISTER KJOLV EGELAND, A PROFESSIONAL EDUCATOR FROM NORWAY'S RELIGIOUS SOUTH-WEST IS WELL CHOSEN TO MODERATE THE CONTROVERSIES WHICH HAVE ARISEN BETWEEN THE LABOR GOVERNMENT AND TEACHERS OVER EDUCATION REFORM AND WITH RELIGIOUS GROUPS OVER EDUCATIONAL POLICIES. FORMER MINISTER AND TOP LABOR POLITICIAN BJARTMAR GJERDE RAMMED THROUGH THE REFORMS AS CALLED FOR BY PARTY POLICY AND EGELAND WILL NOT GET TO REFINE AND APPLY THEM IN SUCH A WAY AS TO SMOOTH RUFFELED FEATHERS BEFORE THE 1977 ELECTIONS. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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6. AGRICULTURAL MINISTER OSKAR OKSNES (OR AEKSNES), LIKE HIS PREDECESSOR, HAS SOLID EXPERIENCE AND SUPPORT IN AGRICULTURAL CIRCLES, BUT IS IN THE SAME DIFFICULT POSITION OF TRYING TO CARE FOR FARM INTERESTS AND GAIN FARM SUPPORT FOR THE LABOR PARTY WHICH DEPENDS PRIMARILY ON TRADE UNION AND URBAN SUPPORT AND HAS BEEN LOSING SUPPORT IN RURAL AREAS.

7. DETAILED BACKGROUND ON THESE CABINET MEMBERS IS
AS FOLLOWS: (BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED)

8. COMMUNICATIONS-RAGNAR CHRISTIANSEN.

CHRISTIANSEN WAS FINANCE MINISTER IN THE FIRST BRATTELI
GOVERNMENT. DEPARTMENT HAS COMPLETE BIOGRAPHIC INFOR-
MATION ABOUT HIM UP TO SEPTEMBER 1972. HE RETURNED
TO THE STORTING (PARLIAMENT) WHEN THAT GOVERNMENT
RESIGNED. IN FALL 1973, HE WAS ELECTED LABOR PARTY
DEPUTY PARLIAMENTARY LEADER AND STORTING FINANCE
COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN. CHRISTIANSEN WAS ORIGINALLY A
RAILROAD EMPLOYEE, AND THUS IS NO NEWCOMER TO COMMUN-
ICATIONS AND TRANSPORTATION.

9. COMMERCE AND SHIPPING-HALLVARD BAKKE.

BAKKE WAS BORN FEB 4, 1943, IN NUMEDAL NEAR KONGSBERG
IN SOUTHERN NORWAY. HE GRADUATED FROM THE NATIONAL
ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION SCHOOL IN BERGEN,
WORKED AS A JOURNALIST FOR BERGEN'S LABOR DAILY
(BERGENS ARBEIDERBLAD) FOR A YEAR, DID PUBLIC RELATIONS
WORK FOR BERGEN'S NATIONAL THEATER (DEN NATIONAL SCENE)
AND BECAME ITS BUSINESS MANAGER AT 26, IN 1969. HE
HAS BEEN A BERGEN CITY COUNCIL MEMBER SINCE 1972 AND
WAS REELECTED THROUGH 1979. HE IS A MEMBER OF THE
COUNCIL'S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND WAS ELECTED TO BE
LABOR'S MUNICIPAL COUNSELLOR" (A POLITICAL POSITION
OVERSEEING A MAJOR SECTOR OF CITY ADMINISTRATION)
IN BERGEN'S NON-SOCIALIST -DOMINATED CITY GOVERNMENT.
HE WAS ACTIVE IN THE LABOR PARTY YOUTH ORGANIZATION
(AUF), HAS HELD A NUMBER OF LABOR PARTY JOBS AND
HAS BEEN PROVINCIAL LABOR PARTY CHAIRMAN FOR
HORDALAND PROVINCE (WHICH INCLUDES BERGEN) SINCE 1974.
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HE IS THE SECOND PARLIAMENTARY ALTERNATIVE FROM HORDA-
LAND, BAKKE CAMPAIGNED ACTIVELY AGAINST NORWEGIAN
COMMON MARKET MEMBERSHIP, BUT REMAINED LOYAL TO THE
LOYAL PARTY WHEN OTHER MEMBERS OF THE "WORKERS'
INFORMATION COMMITTEE" (AIK) LEFT LABOR TO FORM THE
SOCIALIST ELECTORAL LEAGUE, NOW SOCIALIST LEFT PARTY
(SV). AT 32, HE WILL BE THE YOUNGEST MEMBER SINCE WORLD
WAR II. HE IS MARRIED, WITH TWO CHILDREN SIX AND THREE).
HE SPEAKS ENGLISH.

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10. SOCIAL AFFAIRS - RUTH RYSTE.

MRS. RYSTE WAS BORN JULY 24, 1932, IN BAMBLE. FROM 1950 TO 1970, SHE WAS EMPLOYED AT THE SOCIAL SECURITY (I.E., NATIONAL HEALTH, OLD AGE, DISABILITY, ETC. INSURANCE) OFFICE IN BAMBLE (A LARGE RURAL MUNICIPALITY JUST SOUTH OF PORSGRUNN IN SOUTHERN NORWAY AND ADJACENT TO NORWAY'S LARGEST PETROCHEMICAL COMPLEX AT HEROVA IN PORSGRUNN MUNICIPALITY). SHE WAS ELECTED PRESIDENT OF TELEMAR'S PROVINCIAL SOCIAL SECURITY EMPLOYEES UNION (NORSK TJENESTEMANNSSLAG -- NTL). SHE WAS ALSO ACTIVE IN LOCAL LABOR PARTY AFFAIRS, SERVING ON BAMBLE'S CITY COUNCIL AND MANY MUNICIPAL COMMITTEES. FROM 1971-73 SHE WAS ELECTED SECRETARY OF NTL (ONE OF THREE ELECTED OFFICERS). IN OCTOBER 1973, SHE BECAME PERSONAL SECRETARY TO CONSUMER AND ADMINISTRATION MINISTER ODD SAGOR. A YEAR LATER SHE WAS ELECTED SECRETARY OF THE GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES UNIONS' BARGAINING "CARTEL" (ONE OF THREE ELECTED OFFICERS THERE, ALSO) AND LEFT THE GOVERNMENT. HER HUSBAND, OYVIND, WAS A BRIGHT YOUNG OFFICER IN THE CHEMICAL WORKERS' UNION AT HEROYA

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AND WAS CHOSEN IN 1971 TO JOIN THE SOCIAL SCIENTISTS AT PROF. THORSRUD'S WORK-PSYCHOLOGY INSTITUTE IN OSLO IN ENCOURAGING AND ADVISING COMPANIES AND UNIONS DEVELOPING WORKER PARTICIPATION AND WORKPLACE DEMOCRACY EXPERIMENTS, A PIONEERING EFFORT RECOGNIZED WORLDWIDE. MR. RYSTE CONTINUES RESEARCH WORK AT THE INSTITUTE. MRS. RYSTE TAKES OVER FROM TOR HALVORSEN NOT ONLY AS SOCIAL MINISTER, BUT ALSO AS THE NORWEGIAN TRADE UNION FEDERATION'S (LO) CABINET MEMBER. TRADITIONALLY, LO ALWAYS HAS ONE MEMBER OF A LABOR GOVERNMENT. SHE AND HALVORSEN ARE ALSO BOTH FROM TELEMARKE PROVINCE.

11. CHURCH AND EDUCATION - KJOLV EGELAND. EGELAND, BORN IN HAUGESUND SEPT 8, 1918, IS RECTOR OF THE CITY OF STAVANGER'S CATHEDRAL SCHOOL, A PRESTIGIOUS HIGH SCHOOL. AFTER RECEIVING HIS PHD IN 1943, HE TAUGHT AT ST. SVITHUNS SCHOOL IN STAVANGER, 1945-51, BEFORE ASSUMING THE POSITION HE NOW LEAVES. HE INTERRUPTED HIS PRESENT JOB TO SERVE AS DIRECTOR OF THE ROGALAND PROVINCE (WHICH INCLUDES STAVANGER) REGIONAL COLLEGE, 1969-74, HE HAS BEEN A MEMBER OF STAVANGER'S CITY COUNCIL AND ITS EXECUTIVE AND CULTURAL COMMITTEES, OF THE NATIONAL BROADCASTING COUNCIL (1960-66), AND HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE (1964). HE HAS SERVED AS MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL CULTURAL COUNCIL, AND CHAIRMAN OF ROGALAND'S UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE SINCE 1965 AND OF THE STAVANGER RADIO PROGRAM COUNCIL SINCE 1967. HE IS A WELL-KNOWN WRITER AND LITERARY CRITIC, PARTICULARLY OF WORKS OF THE NORWEGIAN AUTHOR SIGURD HOEL, AND WAS CHIEF EDITOR OF A NORWEGIAN "HISTORY OF LITERATURE IN OUR TIME." WE BELIEVE HIS ENGLISH IS EXCELLENT.

12. AGRICULTURE - OSKAR INGEMANN OKSNES (OR OEKSNES). OKSNES WAS BORN IN KVAM APRIL 11, 1921. HE GRADUATED FROM VAL AGRICULTURAL SCHOOL IN 1938 AND NORWAY'S AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE IN 1947. HE SERVED AS AN AGRONOMIST IN NORTH TRONDELAGE PROVINCE, 1948-55, INCLUDING A DETAIL TO THE AGRICULTURAL MINISTRY IN OSLO, 1952-53, AND BECAME PROVINCE AGRONOMIST IN 1956. HE WAS SECRETARY OF THE COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR AGRICULTURAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SUBSIDIES, 1953-54, LAND REGISTRY COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN, 1955-56, DEPUTY MAYOR OF THE TOWN OF EGGE, 1956-62, EGGE ASSESSMENT BOARD CHAIRMAN, 1960-62, INN-TRONDELAGE (SOUTHERN NORTH TRONDELAGE) LABOR PARTY BOARD MEMBER 1955-62 (VICE CHAIRMAN, 1957-59 AND CHAIRMAN, 1960-62). HE HAS BEEN A MEMBER OF THE LABOR PARTY AGRICULTURAL COMMITTEE SINCE 1960. HE MOVED TO THE PROVINCE OF

MORE OG ROMSDAL AS PROVINCIAL AGRICULTURAL CHIEF
IN 1963, WAS UNDERSECRETARY IN THE AGRICULTURAL MIN-
ISTRY, 1964-65, AND BECAME A MEMBER OF THE MOLDE
CITY COUNCIL'S EXECUTIVE BOARD IN 1968. HE RETURNED
TO NORTH TRONDELAG RECENTLY AS PROVINCIAL AGRICULTURAL CHIEF.
OKSNES WAS CHAIRMAN OF A NATIONAL COMMISSION WHICH
EVALUATED THE AGRICULTURAL SUBSIDY SYSTEM IN 1974.
THE CENTER (FORMERLY FARMERS') PARTY NEWSPAPER
"NATIONEN" COMMENTED POSITIVELY THAT OKSNES' NOMINATION
OBVIOUSLY AROUSES SPECIAL EXPECTATIONS, ESPECIALLY
AFTER THE WORK OF HIS COMMITTEE, AND NOW HE WOULD HAVE
A CHANCE TO CARRY THAT WORK FURTHER. THE NEWSPAPER
QUESTIONED HOW MUCH "ELBOW ROOM" HE WOULD HAVE IN THE
LABOR GOVERNMENT TO CARRY OUT EQUALIZATION OF FARM
AND WORKERS INCOMES WITHIN THE ANNOUNCED TARGET TIME
FRAME (SIX YEARS). (END UNCLASSIFIED).
BYRNE

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